

December 14, 2009 - Special Town Council Meeting

At a Special Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Middletown, RI, held at the Middletown Town Hall on Monday, December 14, 2009 at 5:30 P.M.

Council President Christopher T. Semonelli, Presiding

Vice Chairman Richard Cambra

Councillor Frank A. Bozyan

Councillor M. Theresa Santos

Councillor Edward J. Silveira, Jr.

Councillor Robert J. Sylvia

Councillor Barbara A. VonVillas, Members Present

POSTED – December 11, 2009

Wendy J.W. Marshall, Town Clerk

Town of Middletown

Town Hall – 350 East Main Road

Middletown, Rhode Island 02842

Dear Mrs. Marshall:

Pursuant to the provisions of Article II, Section 203 of the Town Charter and in accordance with Sections 42-46-2 and 42-46-6., RIGL, I hereby call a Special Meeting of the Town Council to formally consider, discuss and act upon the following items of business:

- 1. Memorandum of Councillor Silveira, re: Preliminary proposal – Aircraft Carrier.**

2. Meeting with School Department, re: Budget – to review estimated revenues, estimated expenditures, estimated enrollment and estimated staffing requirements for the schools.

3. (Continued from Regular Meeting, November 16, 2009)

Memorandum of Councillor VonVillas, re: Regionalization.

4. School Facilities – necessity of school construction - Fielding Nair Report.

Said meeting will be held on Monday, December 14, 2009, at 5:30 P.M. at the Middletown Town Hall, 350 East Main Road, Middletown, Rhode Island 02842.

Christopher T. Semonelli,

President

Middletown Town Council

CC:

Town Council

Public Library

School Committee

Town Administrator

Finance Director

Town Solicitor

This meeting location is accessible to the handicapped. Individuals requiring interpreter services for the hearing-impaired should notify the Town Clerk's Office at 847-0009 not less than 48 hours before the

meeting.

On motion of Vice Chairman Cambra, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to receive said communication.

Also present were Town Administrator Shawn Brown, Town Solicitor Michael W. Miller, at 6:00 PM, Finance Director Lynne Dible and Deputy Finance Director Marc Tanguay arrived.

1. Memorandum of Councillor Silveira, re: Preliminary proposal – Aircraft Carrier.

On motion of Councillor Silveira, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to receive said memorandum.

Present, representing the USS Saratoga Museum Foundation, were

President Frank Lennon and Deputy Executive Director Bill Sheridan.

Councillor Silveira explained that this preliminary proposal is to consider docking the USS Saratoga aircraft in Middletown.

Frank Lennon, President of the USS Saratoga Museum Foundation, explained that docking the aircraft in Middletown will provide positive economic and educational benefits for the Town. Mr. Lennon presented a power point presentation to the Council, which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk.

After the presentation there was a short question and answer period. Discussion centered around the size of the USS Saratoga Museum Foundation, deadline for proposal report submission to Navy, Quonset Point, studies conducted before the aircraft placement and risks to the Town.

Mr. Lennon, responding to inquires, noted that the USS Saratoga

Museum Foundation is non-profit having an average operating budget of \$250,000. The report to the Navy is due mid-January 2010. The Town may retract from the proposal at any time with no cost or risk to the Town. At this time, the foundation is requesting conceptual approval.

It was the consensus of the Council to consider this request at the January 4, 2010 regular meeting of the Council.

Mr. Frank Lennon and Mr. Bill Sheridan left the meeting at 6:10 PM.

Present, representing the School Department were Superintendent Rosemarie Kraeger, Assistant Superintendent Linda Savastano, Director of Facilities Edward Collins, School Committee Chair Michael Crowley, Vice Chair Theresa Spengler, members Kellie DiPalma and Liana Ferreira Fenton.

2. Meeting with School Department, re: Budget – to review estimated revenues, estimated expenditures, estimated enrollment and estimated staffing requirements for the schools.

On motion of Vice Chairman Cambra, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to receive said review of estimated revenues, estimated expenditures, estimated enrollment and estimated staffing requirements for the schools.

Town Administrator Shawn Brown noted that this is an annual discussion concerning the upcoming budget, focus will be on revenue. Mr. Brown presented and reviewed a power point presentation with the following highlights:

Mr. Brown also reviewed the following revenue forecast entered here:

Council President Semonelli suggested that there be a serious review

of sharing services between the Town and School.

Superintendent Rosemarie Kraeger explained that impact aid only includes 60% of student cost, military enrollment is stable, most students do not live on base, enrollment is stable only an with an increase of 30 students, most student enrollment has been seen in the ninth grade.

School Committee Chair Michael Crowley noted that after the closing of JFK School the current facilities are at their maximum capacity.

Discussion centered around class sizes, pressure on teachers, what areas will be reduced when preparing the budget, the effect on education when reducing programs, Senate Bill 3050, unfunded mandates, pay-to-play sports, regionalization and strategic planning.

Councillor VonVillas suggested that all day kindergarten not be considered when reducing programs.

School Committee Chair Michael Crowley noted that there has been no review of the budget, the process begins in January 2010.

Councillor Silveira expressed the need for a strategic planning retreat consisting of the School Committee, School Administration, Town Administration and Town Council.

There was a consensus of support between the School representatives and Town for a strategic plan retreat.

On motion of Councillor Silveira, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to schedule a strategic plan retreat, with School Committee members and Town Council, in February 2010.

3. (Continued from Regular Meeting, November 16, 2009)

Memorandum of Councillor VonVillas, re: Regionalization.

On motion of Vice Chairman Cambra, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to receive said memorandum.

Councillor VonVillas reviewed legislation concerning the establishment of a Regional Planning Committee, RIGL 16-3-3.1.

School Committee Chair Michael Crowley explained that the Aquidneck Island School/Municipal Advisory Group is an ad hoc committee consisting of volunteers from School Committees, Town Council Members and Town Managers, which discuss many areas including how to improve Aquidneck Island. The group has reviewed the questions cited in RIGL 16-3-3.1 and have agreed that they are not qualified to answer these questions. The group has requested funds from School Committees and Council in Newport, Middletown and Portsmouth to support a study by RIPEC for the educational benefits of regionalization of schools on Aquidneck Island. This study is intended to be given to the public for review and consideration. The

group would support a formal Regional Planning Committee.

Discussion centered around the creation of a Regional Planning Committee, the excellent work done by the Aquidneck Island School/Municipal Advisory Group, regionalization interest of other communities and establishing a Regional Planning Committee at the next regular meeting of the Council.

On motion of Council President Semonelli, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to establish a Regional Planning Committee, allocate funding for an educational study of Regionalization of Schools on Aquidneck Island to Charles Shoemaker, MD, Chairman of the Aquidneck Island School/Municipal Advisory Group and place these matters on the regular meeting agenda January 4, 2010.

4. School Facilities – necessity of school construction - Fielding Nair Report.

On motion of Vice Chairman Cambra, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to receive said report.

Town Administrator Shawn Brown reviewed a handout from the Rhode Island Department of Education concerning Necessity of School Construction, which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk. Mr. Brown also reviewed the 2007 report prepared by Fielding Nair International. The RI Department of Education requires the Town to have a plan in place so housing aid is not at risk. Mr. Brown recommends the Town Council to adopt the Fielding Nair plan however; status quo will be maintained until the economy improves.

School Committee Chair Michael Crowley explained that there is no intention to request a new school or place a bond issue on the ballot. The request is that the Town Council endorse the Fielding Nair study.

On motion of Vice Chairman Cambra, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to adjourn this meeting at 8:00 P.M.

Wendy J.W. Marshall, CMC

Council Clerk

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